

We Have Our Own Trumps, Thank You

Written by Mark Sell, BT Contributor
July 2016

The Trump Group does big things quietly



his is a tale of two Trump clans.

You know all about The Donald by now, but you might not know as much about Jules, Stephanie, and Eddie Trump. They developed Williams Island, and continue to reshape Sunny Isles Beach, and they have a long reach when it comes to educational opportunity.

Drive up Collins Avenue from Haulover Beach through Sunny Isles Beach, and you'd almost think Donald Trump owned half the beachfront. You've got the three Trump Towers, with 45 stories and 271 units each; plus the Trump Grande complex, which consists of the 31-story Trump International Beach Resort, the 43-story Trump Royale, and the 43-story Trump Palace.

But Donald Trump and his organization didn't actually build them and doesn't own them. He branded them, while the father-and-son team of Michael and son Gil Dezer actually developed the projects. Trump did the same thing with Jorge Pérez and the Related Group about five miles up the road at the 41-story Trump Hollywood.

Like other developers around the country, the Dezers and Pérez paid Trump to market their properties by putting his name on them. Such is the power of earned publicity, as the Republican primaries proved. Branding is one of the most reliable ways Trump makes money in

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his private conglomerate.

This brings us to the other Trumps: Jules, age 72; wife Stephanie, 71; and brother Edmond “Eddie” Trump, 70. Their office is based in Aventura.

Like The Donald, they develop luxury properties. But there’s no family relationship; they’re Jewish, from South Africa, like to stay out of the paper, focus on charities, don’t put their names on their buildings, and barely have a website.

The Aventura Trumps have the Trump *Group*, where Donald has the Trump *Organization*. They have been firmly planted in South Florida since 1980, when they started developing 84-acre Williams Island in Aventura, luring Sophia Loren, former Miami Dolphins and Dallas Cowboys head coach Jimmy Johnson, and the late singer Whitney Houston as residents.



In the past decade, the Aventura Trumps have developed the 51-story luxury hotel-condo Acqualina Resort & Spa at 17875 Collins, the 47-story Mansions at Acqualina at 17749 Collins., and biggest of all, Estates of Acqualina right next door, a \$1.8-billion, two-tower, 51-story megalith scheduled for 2019, with 264 ultra-luxe homes running from \$4 million to \$40 million.

Among the planned amenities: an ice-skating rink; bowling alley; a movie theater; children’s and teens’ game rooms; a computer and electronics room; a Wall Street Trader’s Clubroom, a sculpture garden and walking trails; meditation area; six pools, one with a FlowRider for surfing; a bocce court; dog park; and soccer field and a half-court for basketball.

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The Aventura Trumps have also developed the Luxuria on the Ocean residences in Boca Raton.

“We build the world’s finest residences,” says Michael Goldstein, the sales director. “Our product comes furniture-ready. The Trump Group is private -- very private.”

While the Trump Group has created elaborate websites for Acqualina, Williams Island, and other developments, the closest thing to a Trump Group general website is through TG Ventures, the group’s arm that invests in “Israeli innovative companies to bring products to the Chinese market” and, more generally, “advanced startups” in the Israeli high-tech industry. The Trump Group also has interests in real estate, chemicals and fertilizer, retail, financial services, and technology and science.□

The Trump Group’s low profile just might have something to do with Donald Trump’s old mentor and legal pit bull, Roy Cohn, the legal wunderkind who parlayed his notoriety as Joe McCarthy’s right-hand man into a combative, 30-year legal career in New York, with a client list that included the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, Studio 54 owners Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell, mobsters Anthony “Fat Tony” Salerno, and Carmine “Cigar” Galante. And Donald Trump was an occasional client. Cohn is said to have introduced Trump to litigiousness and bare-knuckled celebrity.

In September 1984, Trump sicced Cohn on Jules and Eddie Trump for usurping the Trump name after he learned that the Trump Group was bidding on the Pay’n’Save drugstore chain. An August 2015 article, “The Notorious Case of The Donald vs. Trump,” on *Crain’s New York Business* website, recounts how Cohn ordered the Trump Group to change its name by the next business day, and later sued them in New York State Court.

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